

want to raise the Federal debt ceiling \$1.8 trillion. The current debt in the country is over \$12 trillion.

When I first came here 3 years ago, I introduced a constitutional balanced budget amendment. I hear up here the last 3 years that the Democrats are the problem, the Republicans are the problem on the spending. They're both the problem. In the last 50 years, they've only balanced the budget five or six times, yet 49 out of 50 Governors have to balance the budget.

Our State of Florida has had a tough cycle in terms of revenues. They've cut expenses. Families are cutting expenses. Small businesses in our communities are cutting 20, 30 percent in expenses, yet we're raising expenses 12 percent.

The time is now. We almost had a constitutional balanced budget amendment in 1994. That's the only thing that's going to solve the problem. We need to act today as Democrats and Republicans and do what's right for America and Americans.

SS ST. LOUIS

(Mr. KLEIN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, this week I had the chance to meet with some of the survivors of the *SS St. Louis* in my community of south Florida. This was a memorable and moving experience that provides each of us with a powerful lesson about our past.

As you know, the *SS St. Louis* carried nearly 1,000 Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in 1939, and, shamefully, the United States turned the ship away. Its passengers were sent back to Europe where hundreds of them perished. We cannot forget this dark moment in our Nation's history, and we must remember the story and share it with our next generation in order to keep our promise of "never again."

I'd like to associate myself with Senate Resolution 111 passed by the U.S. Senate, which recognizes the tragedy of the *SS St. Louis* and honors the memory of the passengers who lost their lives. I join my colleagues and continue to pay tribute to those who did not survive, and I express my gratitude for the opportunity to join the survivors in person this week.

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AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER AND U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to be with our resilient troops last week in Afghanistan near the violent southern border with Pakistan. Part of their mission is to secure the border by preventing drugs, arms, money and Taliban criminals

from crossing back and forth through the vast border regions. It's in America's interest to have our military in Afghanistan and protect the sovereignty of that country.

It is ironic, however, we see the need to protect the borders of other nations; but because of political reasons, we don't have the moral will to protect our own borders. This is not the first administration that has given a wink and a nod to our porous borders, but it should be the last.

Our southern border region is a haven for organized criminal cartels, gun smugglers, human smugglers and rogue outlaws that cross as freely as they did in the days of the old west. We should be as concerned about protecting our own border as we are about protecting the borders of Third World countries like Afghanistan. We should put our military on the border if necessary.

After all, the first duty of government is protection of our own homeland.

And that's just the way it is.

JOBS

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today for American working men and women who want to work but can't find a job. The Nation's unemployment rate stands at 10 percent, with my home State of California ranking third worst in the country.

While I support a stronger safety net to help families survive, in the end, Americans don't want unemployment checks. They want to work.

That's why I'm proud to support the Jobs for Main Street Act which will put Americans back to work in the most direct way possible: by hiring them. This bill makes overdue investments in America's rails, roads and schools and in well-paying Davis-Bacon-covered jobs for our workers.

The benefits for our economy of encouraging unionized jobs cannot be overstated. As the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Everyone knows that the labor movement did not diminish the strength of the Nation, but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole Nation to undreamed of levels of production."

May this bill continue in that tradition.

JOBS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, as we approach the Christmastime, too many Americans are asking, Where are the jobs? In January, the unemployment rate was 7.6 percent. Only 10 months

later, the national unemployment reached a whopping 10.2 percent, the highest level since April 1983. That means today there are 15.7 million unemployed Americans looking for work.

House Republicans have an economic recovery plan that will help get Americans back to work. Our economic recovery plan will create twice the jobs at half the cost of the Democrats' failed stimulus plan.

How ironic that our colleagues are coming to the floor today to talk about the need for jobs when it is their votes and the policies of this President that have killed so many jobs.

It's time we started working on behalf of the American people and focus on real commonsense solutions that will help put people get back to work and let them celebrate Christmas in a wonderful way.

JOB CREATION PROGRAM

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to my good friend on the other side of the aisle from the great State of North Carolina who pointed out that there are many jobless Americans. That's true, but let's put this in perspective. The last month that former President Bush was in office, this country lost over 750,000 jobs.

Under President Barack Obama's leadership, we are trending in the right direction. This last month, we lost 11,000 jobs. The last 5 months of the Bush administration, they lost well over 600,000 jobs.

And as Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz pointed out at a joint economic hearing last week, that job creation during the Bush administration was fueled by an artificial bubble. Inflated housing prices and a ballooning real estate market spurred consumption and hiring and put us in a very dangerous position where we find ourselves today.

We owe it to the 15 million jobless Americans to invest in aggressive job creation policies which will be on the floor today in the Democratic jobs program.

STOP THE AUTOMATIC PAY RAISE FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN FISCAL YEAR 2011 ACT

(Mr. MITCHELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, my colleague, Dr. RON PAUL, and I have once again introduced legislation to stop Members of Congress from receiving the next scheduled automatic pay raise. Earlier this year, we introduced legislation to block the fiscal year 2010 pay raise, and we were joined by a bipartisan coalition of more than 100 of our colleagues in the process. Thanks to their help, as well as that of our leadership, the fiscal year 2010 pay raise was blocked.